

Veterans Since I was first elected to Congress last year, I have worked tirelessly on behalf of our nation's brave and patriotic veterans to ensure that they receive the enhanced health care, housing, and educational benefits that they and their families deserve. **IM**

PROVING G.I. BENEFITS

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Immediately following WWII, over 7.8 million veterans were able to obtain college and post-secondary educations free of charge.

However, today, these benefits only cover 70% of public and 30% of private post-secondary educational expenses, making it difficult for many veterans to afford a college education.

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To ensure that veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan receive full educational benefits, I proudly voted to pass the 21ST

Century G.I. Bill, which will provide full, four year scholarships to all who have served in our nation's Armed Forces since September 11, 2001.

This drastic and long overdue increase in educational benefits will help our newest generation of veterans to receive the tools they need to build productive and successful lives for themselves and their families after leaving the military.

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PROVIDING VETERANS WITH ADEQUATE HOUSING

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Disability and unemployment resulting from extended deployments have caused an unacceptably high number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to fall into foreclosure or homelessness.

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In order to support our veterans returning from combat, I voted in favor of legislation that increases the number of homeownership loans available to veterans who are attempting to secure housing.

I also voted in favor of legislation that will increase funding for counseling services and provide additional resources to our nation's homeless veterans.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

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According to early 2009 reports, the United States Army's suicide rate is the highest that it has ever been.

Our returning combat veterans are suffering from increasingly high rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) yet not nearly enough has been done to provide treatment.

I fully understand that in order to cope with the unimaginably difficult experiences of war, our veterans require unique, specialized mental health care.

That's why I supported legislation that will dedicate a minimum of \$3.8 billion to specialty mental-health services for veterans suffering from mental illnesses and PTSD.

Additionally, I offered my support to legislation that mandates increased funding for suicide prevention programs at our nation's VA health care facilities.

Shortly after the Army report was released, I expressed my concern in a letter to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki ([view the letter here](#)).

In the coming months, I will be working with both Secretaries to develop a comprehensive plan to reduce the effects of PTSD and TBI and preempt suicides among our combat veterans and active duty military personnel.